

KHS Soft Tail Police Unit

by Craig Campbell, PCI #605

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For the past five years, I have been assigned to bike patrol duty and have had the opportunity to ride a variety of bikes, both on patrol and recreationally. Recently, I was asked to review the KHS Soft Tail police unit for this publication.

KHS provided me with their police bike, which I rode in various conditions. When I first saw it, I was impressed with its sleek black paint job, which included nearly all of the components (handle bar, stem, seat post, etc.). Looking beyond the cosmetics of the bike, I noted that the major components of the bike consisted of Shimano Deore. The rear hub was the Shimano Silent Clutch while the front hub was Shimano Deore. The frame is constructed of double butted Chromoly. The front and back rims were 36-spoked Alex G6000. The rims were given a fair dose of punishment and they held up quite well.

The bike touts itself as a “soft tail.” This should not be confused with the term “full suspension.” The design of the frame places a small shock, made by power tools, between the seat tube and the seat stay. There are no pivot points on the chain stay, therefore, the shock only provides about one inch of travel. The design was sufficient to dampen the vibration caused by small objects and rough surfaces.

KHS has equipped the bike with the SR SunTour XCP-95 fork. The fork is made of one-piece magnesium legs with a combination of MCU and coil spring suspension. I must admit that at first glance I was concerned about the fork. But after riding the bike, I put aside my misgivings, as the fork provided reliable and smooth performance.

The tires were Kenda Ciry tires with Scotchlite reflective sidewalls. The tire tread is very smooth in the center with some knobbies on the outer edges. They performed quite well on typical city surfaces such as concrete or asphalt. On wet grass, however, they left something to be desired. If you are a fan of retro-reflective material, these tires have Scotchlite material on the side walls, which looks like a white wall. The reflectivity of the tires was an added benefit for conspicuity purposes.

KHS also sells a customized police rack and bag that were supplied with this bike. The rack is bolted onto the seat post, from which it obtains all of its support due to the suspension of the bike. The rack would be cumbersome for bike units whose riders share bikes because to adjust the height of the seat post, it is necessary to unbolt the rack. The rack would be more efficient if it were made with a quick release. In addition, the rear of the rack did not accept a standard reflector or taillight. I was only able to overcome this dilemma by drilling two holes in the plastic end cap of the rack to accept a tail light.

The bag featured Velcro retro-reflective police tabs on each side of the bag and had easy access to all of its compartments. It was a bit tall, exceeding the height of the seat, and caused difficulty when I shifted my weight to the rear when descending obstacles. The bag also featured an external rear pouch for small tools. I found that when the rear pouch is in use, it droops down, obscuring the rear tail light. The bag was secured to the rack with four Velcro tabs and one interlocking clip. If you never remove your bag from your bike, this bag will be sufficient. However, if you require a bag that can be quickly removed and reinstalled in short order, this bag will cause undue difficulty.

Overall, the KHS Police Unit bicycle is well equipped and looks as if it means business. For the price and value, it is a strong competitor against other bikes in its class. The bike retails for \$979 and can be purchased at any authorized KHS dealer. More information about this bike can be obtained at www.khsbicycles.com.

Craig has been an IPMBA instructor since 2002 and lives by the motto, “have bikes, will travel.” He can be reached at safcamp@gmail.com.

KHS ... Another View

by Robert Light

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Ed's Note/Disclosure: Bob Light is the owner of LightCycles, a bike patrol supply company which distributes KHS bikes and other bike patrol-related products.

I have been test riding the KHS (K-9) Police Bicycle to make sure that it is the type of product that I would be proud to recommend to my fellow bike officers. I have ridden about 280 miles across varying terrain, mostly pavement or hard pack dirt. I did some off-road trail riding, but that too was mostly hard pack. I was pleasantly surprised with both the looks of the bicycle and the ride.

A full set of specs can be on page 16 and at http://www.khsbicycles.com/03_police_unit.htm. One of the things I like about the bike is that it comes with many of the essential "extras", such as a rear rack, rack bag, water bottle cages, bar ends, and a rear-mount kickstand. The only difference between the one I tested and the specs listed was the front shock. The bicycle that I tested has a Rock Shox Pilot front shock. I also changed out the pedals and rode SPD clipless pedals. The KHS Police Bicycle also is a *soft tail* design. While it is not full-blown rear suspension, it does dampen those everyday minor hits that you may otherwise absorb in certain parts of your body. Although I ride a lot of off-road bicycles in my free time, I have never ridden a full suspension bicycle or even the ST (soft tail design) of the KHS Police Bicycle. It took a little getting used to, but once my "break in" period was over, I just rode and rode! The mega-nine rear cassette let me climb steep hills and I was able to cruise home in the big-ring. Shifting was great – no problems, and braking was also very good.

Overall, I would give the bicycle an 8-out-of-10 for performance. It did everything I asked it to do. While the price of \$979 dollars as listed on the KHS website is pricey for bargain-shopping departments, I think it is worth a look. Despite the fact that I am a KHS dealer, I tested the Police Bike with an open mind and was hoping to find more wrong with it! So in the interest of full disclosure, let me tell you about my dislikes. First, there is no pedal retention system, so those will have to be added if KHS does not include them in the 2006 line. Second, you will need to buy "Police" stickers for the bicycle. Finally, the water bottle cage needed to be tightened after a week and the rear rack seemed to lean to one side – an old piece of tire tubing solved that problem. Like all police bikes, this one will have to be maintained – a well-maintained bicycle will serve you well!

Bob is the bike patrol coordinator for SUNY Plattsburgh. He is a certified police cyclist through IPMBA and LEBA, a NYS police cyclist instructor, and a NHTSA Community Bicycle Safety Instructor. He can be reached at lightrj@plattsburgh.edu.

Frame	True Temper OXII Delta Linear Down tube/KHS St Design
Fork	Judy XC
Headset	Threadless 1 1/8" w/ alloy cap
Rims	Axle G6000
Hubs (F/R)	Shimano HB-MC12/FHMC18
Tires	Kenda 26x1.95" (fit) w/ reflective strip
Spokes	15G Stainless BK
Derailleur, Front	Shimano Deore
Derailleur, Rear	Shimano Deore
Shifters	Shimano Deore
Chain	KMC Z-9200
Crankset	Shimano 44/32/22
Freewheel	Shimano Deore 11-32/9 speed
Pedals	Alloy VP
Seat Post	Kalloy Alloy
Saddle	Leather
Handlebar	Kore Lite Bar-2 w/ bar ends
Stem	Alloy
Brake Levers	Speed Dial 7
Brakes	Shimano Deore
Color	Squad Car Black
Frame Size	S, M, L, XL
Extras	Kickstand, Rear Rack, Bag, Bar End

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